327TH FIGHTER CONTROL SQUADRON

RECORD

IN MEMORIAM

CAPT. JOHN P. FOLTZ
CPL. WILLIAM M. DUNGAN

DEDICATION

This book is by no means a "professional" job. Neither has it been formulated for the purpose of giving undeserved glory to the brutal business of war. Nor, again, is it in any sense a "puff-sheet". ● It is not a record of war-like events, even though it was born in combat. Rather it is a page of an overwhelming history, a slice if you will, an obscure part, that one small organization played in the great drama. ● What cannot be recorded is the mutual understanding and cooperation that permeated all operations. That living, breathing thing which somehow eludes description yet is the heart of any organization. What cannot be told is the chronicle of hardship and heartbreak and grim purpose. These things, after all, are the heritage of war. ● So this book is dedicated to the oneness of purpose; that purpose that needed no explanation nor pep-talk. This is dedicated to all the little guys who didn't need to be told that man should walk in dignity and in justice and in peace. ● It is dedicated to the smaller things like mail from home, and the larger things like the steadfast faith of the people back home. ● It is dedicated to our Allies, too, because we "were all in this thing together". ● In short, it is dedicated to our brother soldiers, the Navy for its great job on the Normandy beaches and on the Rhine; to every branch of the service; to the men and women on the production line; to our folks; to our wives; to our sweethearts.

This book is dedicated to "The Team".

RECORD

OF THE

THREE TWENTY SEVENTH

FIGHTER CONTROL SQUADRON

GENERAL COURTNEY HODGES
MAJ. GEN. ELWOOD R. QUESADA

WHAT IS FIGHTER CONTROL?

Many puzzled relatives and friends, writing to members of the 327th Fighter Control Squadron, must have asked that question many times. But the answer was always shrouded in necessary mystery because Fighter Control work was on the highly secret list.

Some curious souls thought perhaps it really meant "fire control," and the family heroes were going around with buckets in their hands waiting to put out any stray blazes. One uninformed home-fronter was sure it had something to do with managing prize-fighters, although the connection was vague.

All American controllers owe a great deal to the Royal Air Force which, in many cases, tutored their Yank Allies. Virtually all the officers and men of the 327th Fighter Control Squadron worked with the RAF in the "air offensive of Europe" at one time or another. The British generally credit fighter control with being the biggest factor in the successful defense of London in the dark days of 1940 when the Luftwaffe was at its peak.

All the officers and men of the 327th are alumni of the school at Orlando, Florida, formerly known as the Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics. The Controllers were chosen, for the most part, from men who were familiar with aviation—many having been either air cadets or pilots.

Now, what is fighter control?

We quote from the October, 1944, issue of AIR FORCE magazine:

"The task of directing the air war, the tactical support of ground troops, is a complicated one. Fighter control ... constitutes the heart of air support operations. It is the fighter control's chief job to watch the planes as they fly, put them on target, take them off while they are in flight and send them to a more important mission. Finally, the chief responsibility is to direct our planes against enemy attack and to aid our crippled aircraft in returning home.

"Planes are in the air and their pilots call back by radio to tell what they are doing, what they see and where they are. The pilots call back to the fighter control for some targets and if there are none the planes go out on their own looking for targets.

"Quite often a priority target will dominate a day's proceedings. Orders from the command may say that under no circumstance are planes to be diverted from the job laid out. On that day, a division may be pinned down by enemy guns located in a position that only air power can knock out. The division may call for help and direct the planes to the target or turn it over to fighter control.

"As the system operates, complete with air warning personnel, filterers, tellers and large table-maps on which all planes in the vicinity are 'plotted' fighter control is a logical offensive development of the air defense network protecting the coasts of the United States when hostile air attacks threatened.

"Controllers must have a profound knowledge of weather, navigation and the performance of the particular aircraft being handled.

"Fighter control is continually moving its units, leapfrogging across France and Belgium toward Germany ... from the spot a few miles back of the beach where the tent had been set up under fire from German snipers and artillery.

"Our fighter bombers, directed by control, destroyed more than 900 trucks and 775 pieces of horsedrawn equipment on one typical day."

That, then, should clear up some of the confusion in the minds of the uninformed. The 327th operated 24 hours a day—every day. Because of the desire to give as much aid as possible to the infantry, the 327th was never more than a few miles behind the front and often, as happened in the famous Battle of the Bulge, far ahead of it.

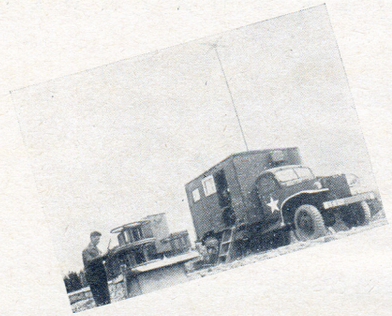
It has now been revealed by Lt. General Courtney Hodges, commanding the First Army, that his headquarters at Spa, Belgium, were almost captured during the breakthrough. The 327th was only 3½ miles from Spa and its position jutted out farther east. Several of the squadron sites were almost overrun. In one case, the Germans captured two men, Pvt. Dexter H. Harris and Pvt. Roscoe Wingate. The two soldiers, taken on 17 December, were in a PW camp until the Americans liberated them late in April.

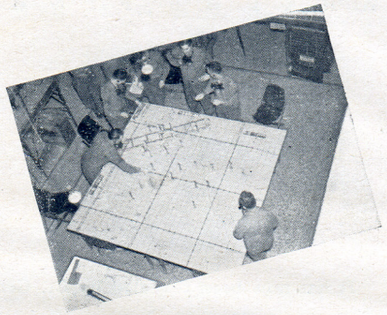
During the breakthrough, the 327th "retired" to Liege, Belgium, which later turned out to be the big German objective. For one week, the dying remnants of the Luftwaffe threw everything it had at the beautiful, industrial city on the banks of the Meuse River. Night and day German planes bombed and strafed and "dogfights" were so common that one could step out almost any time of the day and see American and German planes in combat.

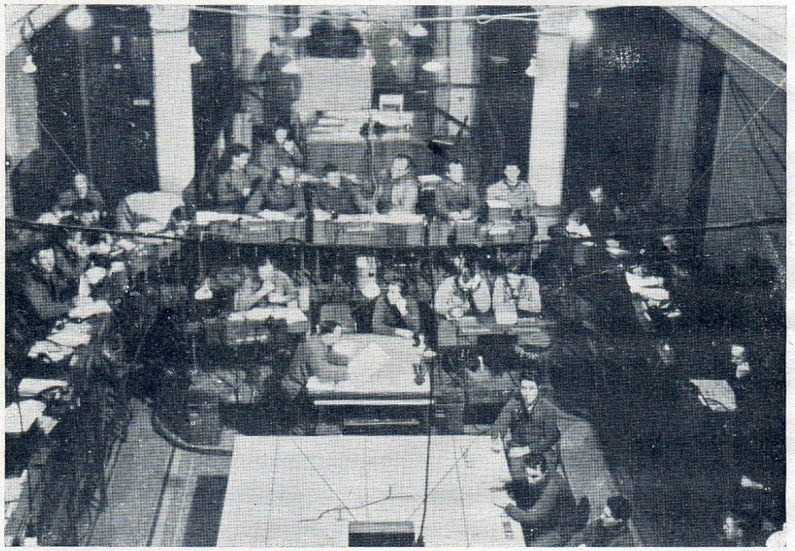
Added to these discomforts, the Germans launched their biggest quota of buzz-bombs on any city with the possible exception of London and Antwerp. The evil V-1's increased daily until they were coming over at the rate of 130 a day. The air raid siren was one continual whine.

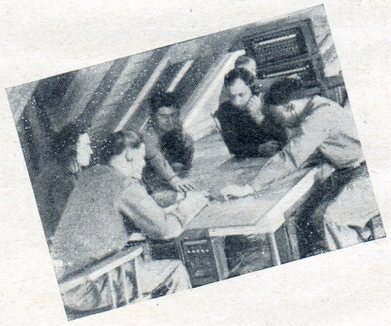
Despite these hazards, there was no decrease in operations and the efficiency is attested by the unprecedented number of enemy vehicles destroyed by fighter control directed aircraft during the "Battle of the Bulge." Four enlisted men were wounded when a buzz-bomb telescoped their communications van during this period. Despite many casualties to Americans and civilians, the 327th emerged from the ordeal virtually unscratched.

Fighter control was fairly safe, but it had its moments.









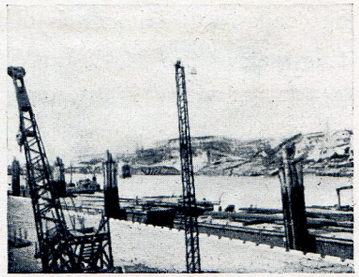
THIS IS SWEEPSTAKES

SQUADRON HISTORY

The 327th Fighter Control Squadron, later to gain fame as the first All-American organization of its type to "hit the beach" in the invasion of Normandy, officially was activated on 20 March, 1943.

Between that time and V-E Day, separated by 26 drama-packed months, there was to be an ever-shifting tide of personnel and the subsequent itinerary seemed like a Cook's tour. There were 19 different changes of station in the 26 months and often the squadron resembled nothing more than a band of gypsies. The race across France and later Germany was nerve-wracking because of the constant movement but comfort was sacrificed for necessity and the realization that every step nearer Berlin was a step nearer peace.

The first Commanding Officer of the squadron was 2d Lt. Ed-



CHERBOURG

ward J. Dennis who gave way to 1st Lt. Jack L. Powell. Then came Major John P. G. McPhee and Major Henry L. Fetherston. To Major Fetherston must go the major credit for the 327th's success. He took over when the squadron went to France and upon him was thrust the major burden of coordinating activities during the hard days of St. Lo and the Battle of the Bulge.

Major Fetherston was succeeded by Lt. Col. C. B. Crockett, whose genius in controlling was an American legend. Col. Crockett had been among the first American controllers during the African campaign and he put his experience to good use in the latter days of the German offensive when the First Army, which the 327th supported, was hammering steadily at the foe.

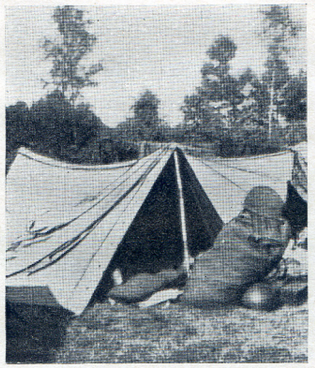
Col. Crockett returned to the United States in May and was succeeded by Major Michael J. Brady, one of the top administrative men of the Air Force. When Major Brady transferred to 9th Air Force, his place was taken by Capt. Robert I. Jones, communications officer and winner of the Legion of Merit for his outstanding work during the spring and summer of 1944.

In the 26 months, the officers and men of the 327th were to know every type of living conditions. There were pup tents in

Normandy, swanky hotels and chateaux in Belgium, abandoned school houses with shattered windows which were no defense against the whistling winter winds; German barracks and apartments—in short, the best and the worst.

There were highlights, too. There was London and Paris and Brussels. Then, after the weary, work-filled months, there was V-E Day.

At last, the long day of peace in Europe had come. To the grim, serious men who filed from the fat belly of the LST in the brooding dawn of that chill June day in 1944, it was a stunning answer to their hopes and prayers. For two days, the squadron had watched



IN THE FIELD

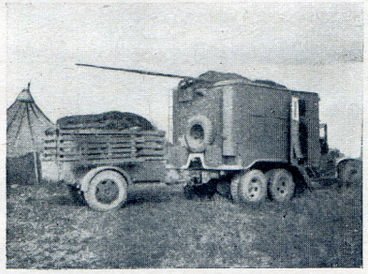
VERVIERS

the mounting battle off the French coast. Arriving on 7 June 1944, the men had been unable to land because of severe enemy action. As the LST waddled into the French port near Grandcamp, a troop transport was sunk a half-mile aft of starboard. The transport had struck a mine. Less than three minutes later, a sister Liberty ship struck another enemy mine—this time only 100 yards away from the anxious onlookers of the 327th Fighter Control Squadron. The ship looked near enough to touch. The dark sky was shredded by fingers of red, white and blue lights—viciously beautiful in the ominous darkness.

OPS TENT

So there had been days in Normandy—days of indecision and doubt; days of sickening impatience. There were days in the field when the comforts of a "lost" civilization wistfully protruded themselves on torturous memory. There were endless days of K-rations, cold, rain, discomfort. There was the rough edge of operations—demanding more and more each passing day. There were days of hard, bitter work and nights of restless wonder as the German planes strafed continuously or the shells came whistling overhead. There was the ironic comfort of the whump of our ack-ack; there were muddy foxholes, and work, work, work!

There was the thrill of the breakthrough at St. Lo, and the knowledge of a scintillating job well-done as the commanding general, in proud and glowing terms, congratulated the squadron.



COMMUNICATIONS

There was the relentless chase through all of France—the liberation of Paris and the hysterical, ecstatic welcome that made every man feel a hero. There was the sober "sit-down" in Belgium; the night-marish withdrawal during the Battle of the Bulge; the air power that helped break the back of the once vaunted Luftwaffe for all time. There was Germany itself; the demands of the Ruhr pocket and the everdistant front which sorely tried the genius and adaptability of the squadron.

And now, high on a lovely hill overlooking a quiet valley—a scene that belied the festering sore of nearby Buchenwald, the men of the 327th Fighter Control Squadron gathered to hear the dramatic voice of England's eloquent Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill.

PARIS

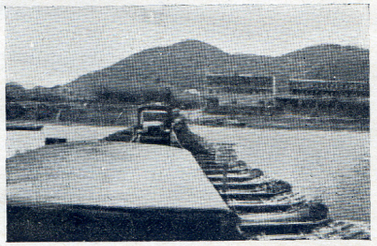
LIEGE

The speech ended. The BBC announcer told of the celebrations touched off "in all the old familiar places"—Paris (remember the liberation); London (wonder what the Piccadilly is like tonight); New York (Broadway, Times Square ... home!).

But there was no celebration in the squadron. Only a deep weariness and thankfulness. Only a reminder of those men who could never celebrate—who had seen the promised land, but did not live to enter it.

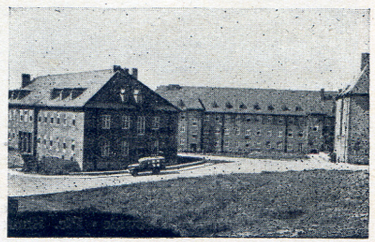
The 26 months had been long and hard. But none could say they weren't worth the effort. They had been thrill-charged months. The men of the 327th had participated in a slice of history.

For that, they could be eternally proud.



CUREING THE RHINE

WEIMAR



1ST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Cpl. Slovinsky • S/Sgt. Conley • S/Sgt. Robinson • Cpl. Justice • S/Sgt. Bucher • Cpl. Matchett • Sgt. Mueller. 2ND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Lt. Weaver • Lt. Poole • Lt. Freeman • Capt. Minton • Lt. Col. Crockett • Major Fetherston • Capt. Banks • Lt. Dorgan • Lt. Libbey. 3RD ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sgt. Noroski • Sgt. Friedel • Pfc. Berken • Sgt. Kreitman • S/Sgt. Poirier Lt. Smith • Lt. Stover • Sgt. Martinez • S/Sgt. Hagan • Pfc. Hoagland • S/Sgt. Odorisio. 4TH ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/5 Giannini • Pvt. Rogers • T/4 Poindexter • Lt. Feldt • Sgt. Williams • T/Sgt. Quist Cpl. Smyth • T/5 Swindells.

1ST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sgt. Cannon • Sgt. Ogier • Cpl. Carmine • Pvt. Kennedy • Pvt. Ebin. S/Sgt. Caskey • S/Sgt. Martinets • Cpl. Drzymkowski. 2ND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/Sgt. Quinn Lt. Werner • Lt. Cleveland • Capt. Minton • Major Fetherston • Lt. Bass • Lt. Norris • Lt. Stone S/Sgt. Haynes. 3RD ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sgt. Klyasheff • Cpl. Duran • Sgt. LeFurjah • Sgt. Nichols • S/Sgt. James • Cpl. McCroarty • Pfc. Jennings • Cpl. Mikuski • Sgt. Ekberg. 4TH ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Pvt. Downie • Pfc. Knutson • Cpl. Bolin • Cpl. Wall • Sgt. Elliott • Pfc. Leotta S/Sgt. Healey • S/Sgt. Jurjevich.

1ST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Pvt. Emerick • M/Sgt. Newquist • Sgt. Krpan • Sgt. Korpi • Cpl. McMillan Pvt. Powell • S/Sgt. Galanti. 2ND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/Sgt. Bayne • Lt. Viebrock • Lt. Nelson Lt. Seton • Capt. Jones • Lt. Reed • Lt. Cummings • Cpl. Ladendorff • Cpl. Sauer. 3RD ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Cpl. Koppel • Cpl. Roof • Pvt. Fowler • Cpl. Sloan • Sgt. Revis • Cpl. Price • Pvt. Lego Cpl. Radika • S/Sgt. Bodurka.

1ST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sgt. Lamonna • Sgt. Barone • Cpl. Fishback • Pfc. Cammack • Pfc. McCauley • Cpl. Hudelson. 2ND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sgt. Kantor • T/Sgt. Rudisill • Lt. Imbier Lt. Emery • Major Brown • Lt. Aronson • Lt. Morgan • S/Sgt. Job • Sgt. Robertson. 3RD ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Pfc. McCarty • Pfc. Hollander • Pfc. Winterberg • Pfc. Spagnola • Sgt. Doty Sgt. Banich • Pfc. Gash • Cpl. Hollister • S/Sgt. Mack. 4TH ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/4 Silberstang • Cpl. Kompa • Sgt. Osnowitz • T/Sgt. Borden.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

MERITORIOUS SERVICE UNIT PLAQUE

Awarded to all personnel of 327th F.C.S. for superior performance of duty in the performance of exceptionally difficult tasks.

LEGION OF MERIT

Captain Robert I. Jones.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Captain Ernest W. Nolby.
Captain Asael J. Olsen.
Captain Allen T. Nash.
1st Lt. John B. Lamb.
1st Lt. Lloyd M. Wenzel.
1st Lt. Hubert P. Edwards.
1st Lt. Owen R. Johnson.
1st Lt. Raymond F. Gay.
1st Lt. William O. Clark.
1st Lt. Franklin K. Leppin.

1st Lt. Howard J. Carstensen.
1st Lt. Albert J. Bouffard.
1st Lt. Robert F. Clark.
1st Lt. Alanson H. Watts.
1st Lt. Charles M. Cronk.
1st Lt. William J. Holyfield.
2nd Lt. Robert H. Walker.

PURPLE HEART

1st Lt. John W. Kotun.
1st Lt. John R. Steele.
1st Lt. Thomas A. Larabee.
S. Sgt. Paul E. Ranc.
Sgt. John I. Cholewa.
Sgt. Walker R. Lipsey.
Cpl. Evan W. Harrison.
Pvt. Alvin M. King.

BRONZE STAR

Major Michael J. Brady.
Captain David W. Minton.
Captain Fredric W. Reed.

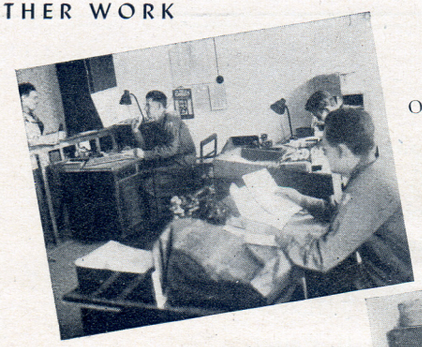
DISTINGUISHED UNIT BADGE

1st Lt. Edward H. Witozen.

BATTLE PARTICIPATION

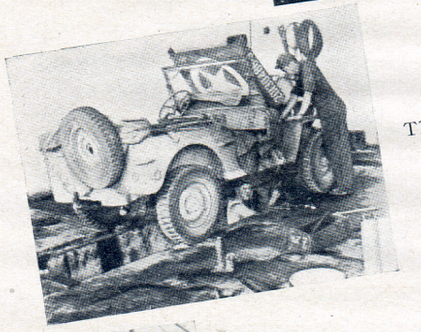
Normandy.
Northern France.
Ardennes.
Rhineland.
Central Europe.

OTHER WORK

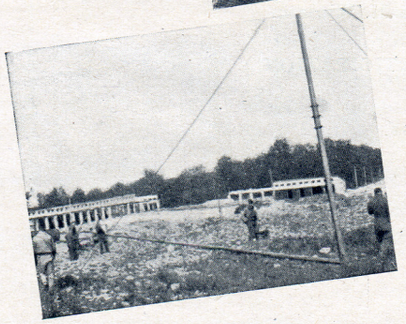


ORDERLY ROOM

TECH SUPPLY



TRANSPORTATION



V. H. F.

THIS IS THE ARMY

MESS

I ANDE

E. M. CLUB

WASHING

SPORTS

THE PAUSE THAT REFRESHES

TRAVELS

U. S. A.

ORLANDO, FLORIDA.
CAMP MYLES STANDISH, MASS.
N.Y.P.O.E., NEW YORK.

UNITED KINGDOM

GOUROCK, SCOTLAND.
ALDERMASTON, ENGLAND.
BOXTED, ESSEX, ENGLAND.
IBSLEY, HANTS, ENGLAND.

FRANCE

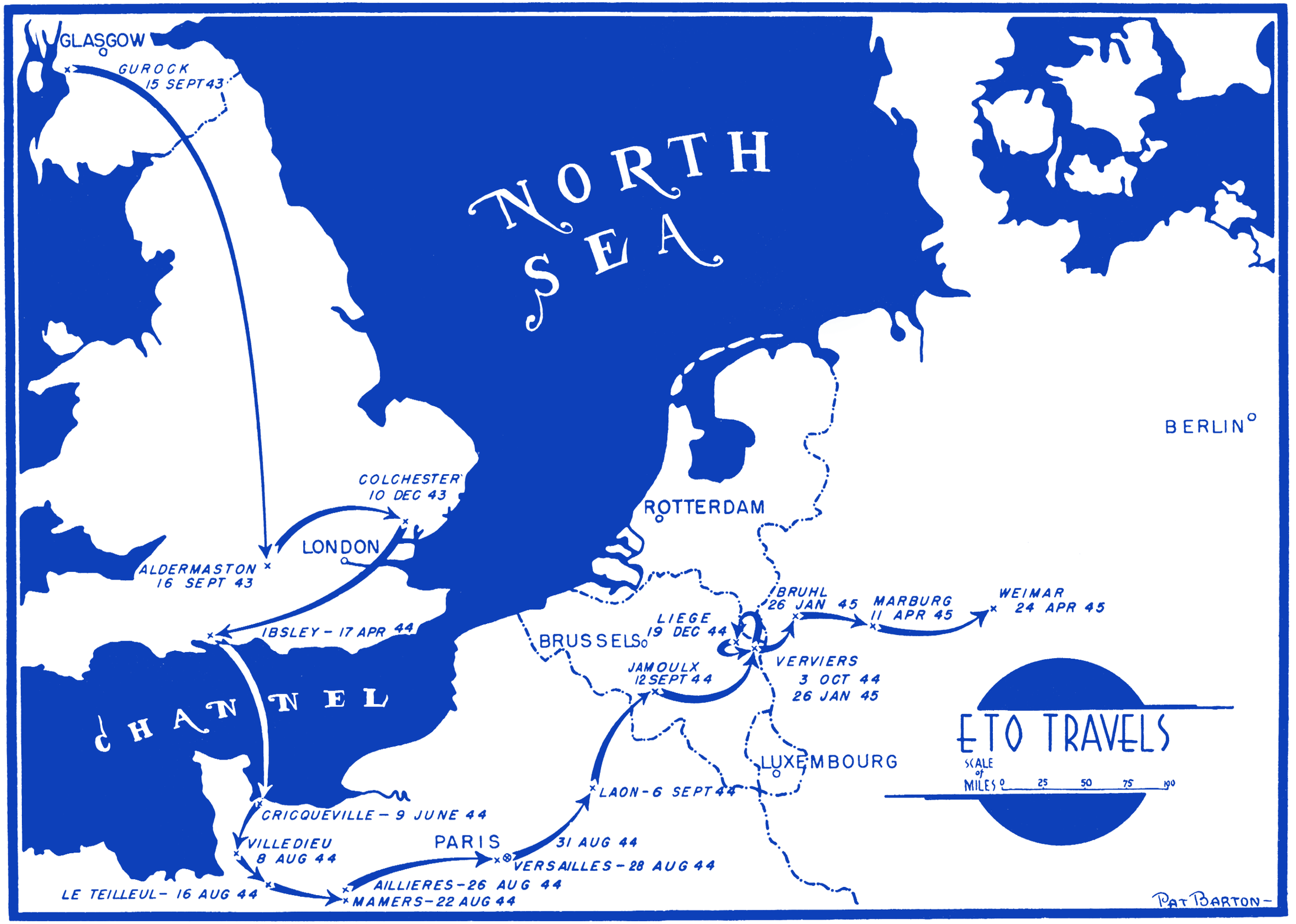
CRIQUEVILLE.
VILLEDIEU.
LE TEILLEUL.
MAMERS.
AILLIERES.
VERSAILLES.
PARIS.
LAON.

BELGUIM

JAMICOULX.
VERVIERS.
LIEGE.

GERMANY

BRUHL.
MARBURG.
WEIMAR.


GLASGOW
GUROCK
15 SEPT 43
NORTH SEA
BERLIN
COLCHESTER
10 DEC 43
ROTTERDAM
LONDON
ALDERMASTON
16 SEPT 43
IBSLEY - 17 APR 44
BRUHL
26 JAN 45
MARBURG
11 APR 45
WEIMAR
24 APR 45
LIEGE
19 DEC 44
BRUSSELS
JAMOULX
12 SEPT 44
VERVIERS
3 OCT 44
26 JAN 45
CHANNEL
ETO TRAVELS
SCALE of MILES 0 25 50 75 100
LUXEMBOURG
LAON - 6 SEPT 44
CRICQUEVILLE - 9 JUNE 44
VILLEDIEU
8 AUG 44
PARIS
31 AUG 44
VERSAILLES - 28 AUG 44
AILLIERES - 26 AUG 44
LE TEILLEUL - 16 AUG 44
MAMERS - 22 AUG 44
PAT BARTON -

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Monette.
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Weimarer Druck- und Verlagsanstalt
Gebr. Knabe K.-G., Weimar
Germany